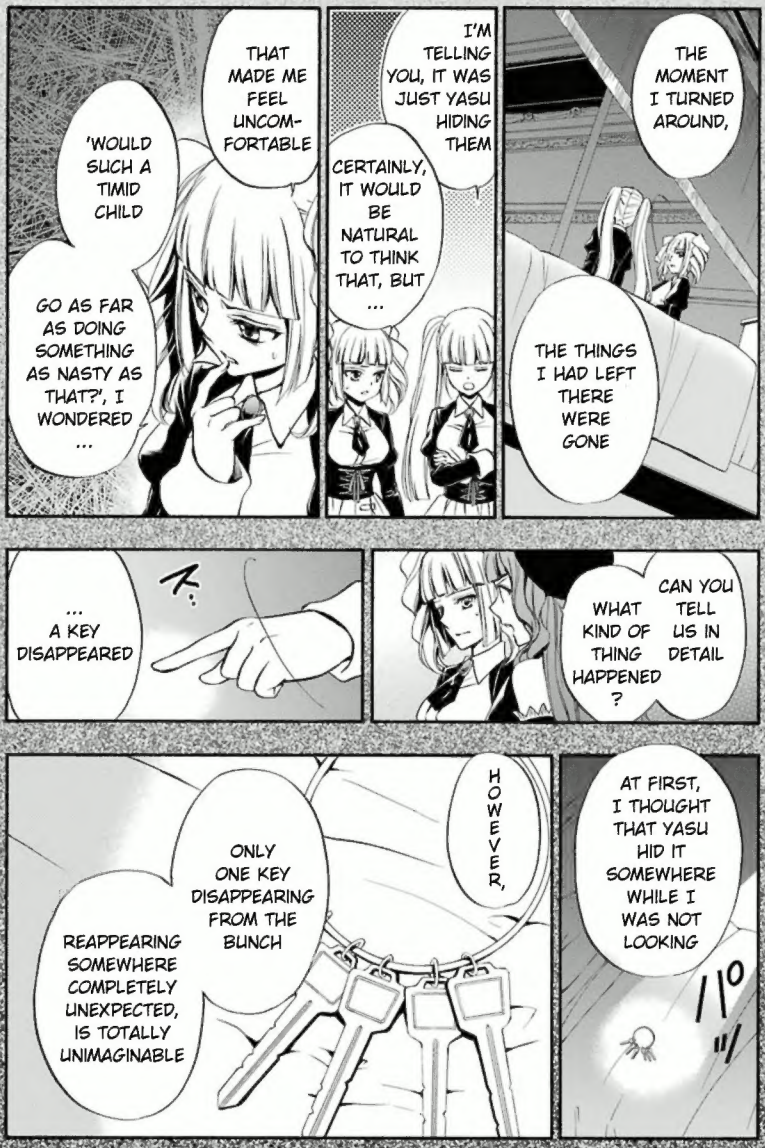
Chapter 24
Witch's Magic

DO YOU THINK THE WITCH BEATRICE REALLY EXISTED...?
... I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS BEATRICE
BUT I'M CERTAIN THAT SOMETHING NOT HUMAN ...
EXISTED IN THAT MANSION
THIS IS RIDICU-LOUS
I'D LIKE TO THINK IT'S RIDICU-LOUS AS WELL
I'M SURE THAT IT WAS YASU'S PRANK ...
NO,
REVENGE, RIGHT?
IN THE BEGINNING, I THOUGHT LIKE THAT, TOO!
BUT ...
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN THAT COULD NOT BE EXPLAINED AS A PRANK ...?
... IT WAS RELENTLESS
... OR RATHER CREEPY

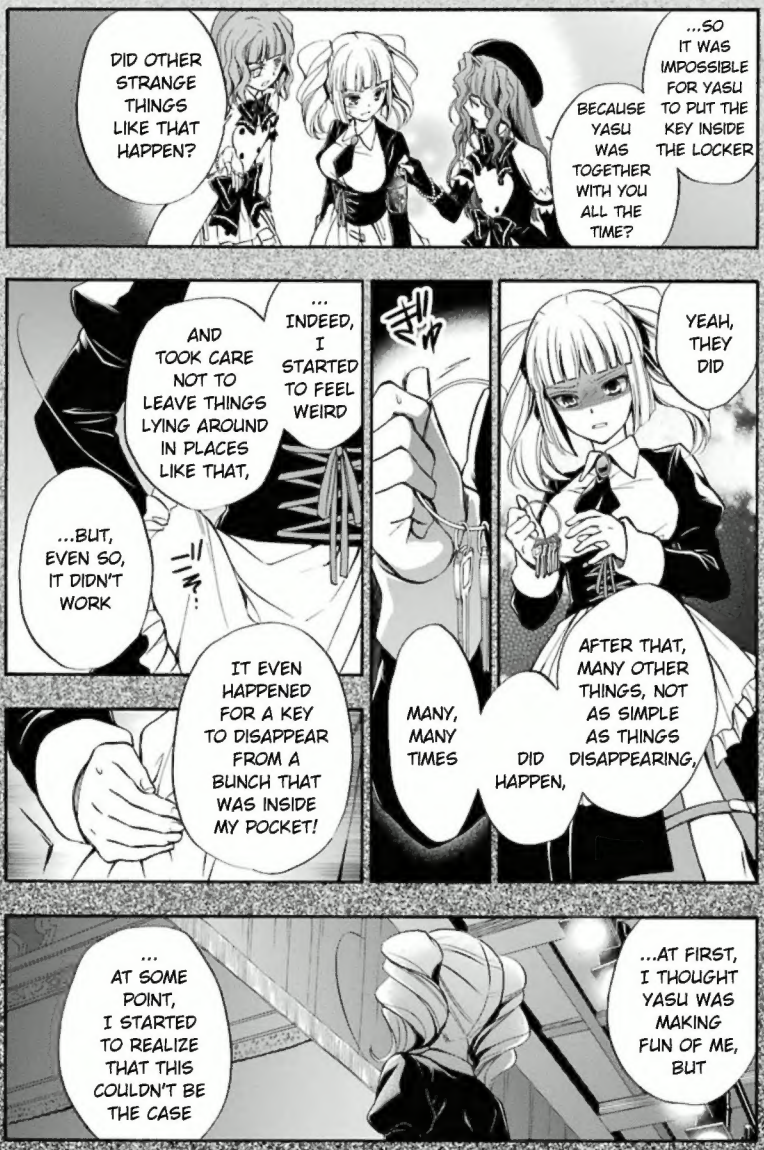

THE MOMENT I TURNED AROUND,
THE THINGS I HAD LEFT THERE WERE GONE
I'M TELLING YOU, IT WAS JUST YASU HIDING THEM
CERTAINLY, IT WOULD BE NATURAL TO THINK THAT, BUT ...
THAT MADE ME FEEL UNCOM-FORTABLE
'WOULD SUCH A TIMID CHILD
GO AS FAR AS DOING SOMETHING AS NASTY AS THAT?', I WONDERED ...
CAN YOU TELL US IN DETAIL WHAT KIND OF THING HAPPENED ?
... A KEY DISAPPEARED
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THAT YASU HID IT SOMEWHERE WHILE I WAS NOT LOOKING
HOWEVER,
ONLY ONE KEY DISAPPEARING FROM THE BUNCH
REAPPEARING SOMEWHERE COMPLETELY UNEXPECTED, IS TOTALLY UNIMAGINABLE

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH ONLY THAT ONE KEY BEING REMOVED WHILE YOU WERE NOT LOOKING ...?
IS SOMETHING LIKE THAT EVEN POSSIBLE !?
PRACTICALLY SPEAKING!
HIDING THE WHOLE BUNCH OF KEYS IS ONE THING, BUT REMOVING A SINGLE KEY FROM THE BUNCH,
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I THINK ABOUT IT, IS NOT SO SIMPLE, YOU KNOW!?
THE KEYS WOULD CLATTER TOGETHER
AND I WAS STANDING RIGHT THERE, FACING THE OTHER WAY, YOU KNOW ?
AND IF YOU TRY TO DO SUCH A THING SLOWLY,
EVEN AN IDIOT LIKE ME WILL NOTICE!
EVEN SO, ONLY ONE KEY DISAPPEARED, WITHOUT EVEN MAKING A SOUND
THIS WAS NOT
A PRANK PLAYED BY YASU TO GET BACK AT ME
...
... IT WAS, WELL,
... AT THAT MOMENT, I REALIZED FOR THE FIRST TIME

SOMETHING MORE DANGEROUS
... I THOUGHT
AND WHERE DID YOU FIND
THAT LOST KEY ?
IN MY
... LOCKER
BERUNE, SINCE YOU ARE SO CARELESS
AND THEN ENDED UP FORGETTING THAT YOU PUT IT AWAY IN YOUR LOCKER...?
COULDN'T YOU, BY ANY CHANCE, REMOVE ONLY THAT KEY FROM THE BUNCH,
WHY WOULD I TAKE THE TROUBLE OF REMOVING ONLY THAT KEY FROM THE BUNCH!?
ASUNE, HAVE YOU EVER REMOVED A KEY FROM THE BUNCH, OR PUT ONE BACK!?
THAT THING IS SUPER STIFF! I WOULDN'T TAKE THE TROUBLE TO DO THAT !
THERE'S NO POINT IN DOING THAT!

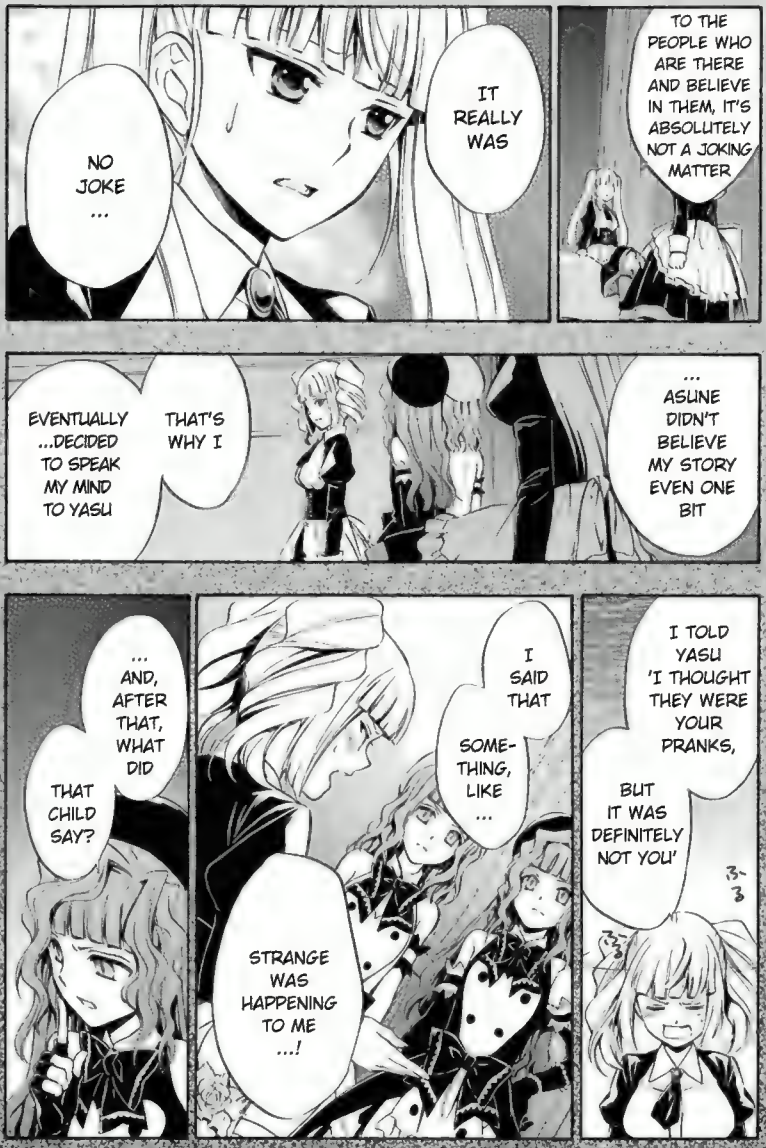
BESIDES ... I AM CERTAIN THAT MY KEY WAS THERE WHEN I ENTERED THE ROOM!
BECAUSE I WAS THE ONE WHO UNLOCKED THAT ROOM!
...IN THAT CASE, INDEED, IT WAS YASU WHO, YOU KNOW SMOOTHLY REMOVED THE KEY WITHOUT MAKING ANY SOUND AND THEN HID IT IN YOUR LOCKER, BERUNE
AT FIRST, THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT AND FLARED UP AT YASU!
'DON'T MESS WITH ME', I SAID
BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I THOUGHT
THIS IS DEFINITELY WEIRD, ISN'T IT?
AFTER ALL, WE WERE GOING AROUND THE ROOM TOGETHER THE WHOLE TIME, RIGHT !?
THERE WAS NO OPENING TO NOISELESSLY REMOVE THE KEY
IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE, NOT ONLY YASU
THERE'S NO WAY ANYONE COULD REMOVE ONE KEY WITHOUT MAKING A SOUND, AND IN SUCH A SHORT TIME!

...BUT, YOU KNOW THEN, WHAT HOW DID !? THE KEY END UP INSIDE MY LOCKER !?
YOU CAN JUST ASSUME THAT YASU SOMEHOW DID IT SECRETLY. YOU CAN FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE THINKING LIKE THAT, AFTER ALL
... BERUNE
IT'S FINE!
... THAT THE REASON THINGS DISAPPEAR
IS BECAUSE IMPOSSIBLE THINGS CAN REALLY HAPPEN WHEN NO ONE EXPECTS, AND ——
UNTIL I FOUND THE KEY IN MY LOCKER, AFTER MAKING A FUSS WHILE SEARCHING EVERY-WHERE, YASU WAS WITH US THE WHOLE TIME, RIGHT!?
YASU WAS WITH US THE WHOLE TIME, RIGHT !?
I ... WHILE JUMPING AT YASU, BEGAN TO FEEL
... I MEAN,
IT WAS AS IF YASU'S EYES WERE SILENTLY TELLING ME


...SO IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR YASU TO PUT THE KEY INSIDE THE LOCKER
BECAUSE YASU WAS TOGETHER WITH YOU ALL THE TIME?
DID OTHER STRANGE THINGS LIKE THAT HAPPEN?
YEAH, THEY DID
AFTER THAT, MANY OTHER THINGS, NOT AS SIMPLE AS THINGS DISAPPEARING, DID HAPPEN,
MANY, MANY TIMES
...INDEED, I STARTED TO FEEL WEIRD
AND TOOK CARE NOT TO LEAVE THINGS LYING AROUND IN PLACES LIKE THAT,
...BUT, EVEN SO, IT DIDN'T WORK
IT EVEN HAPPENED FOR A KEY TO DISAPPEAR FROM A BUNCH THAT WAS INSIDE MY POCKET!
...AT FIRST, I THOUGHT YASU WAS MAKING FUN OF ME, BUT
...AT SOME POINT, I STARTED TO REALIZE THAT THIS COULDN'T BE THE CASE

IT'S NOT THAT YASU IS PLAYING PRANKS ...
BOTH YASU AND ME
WENT THROUGH
THE SAME THING, DIDN'T WE ...!
C- CALM DOWN, WILL YOU ...
I THINK THAT PART OF IT WAS YASU'S PRANKS
...AND MOST OF EVERYTHING ELSE WAS JUST YOU BEING CARELESS OR MISUNDERSTANDING THINGS, BERUNE
... IT'S TRUE THAT THE MANSION'S ALWAYS DARK,
AND HAS AN ATMOSPHERE
WHERE IT WOULDN'T BE STRANGE TO FIND CURSES OR MALEDICTIONS
MAYBE BECAUSE OF THAT,
YOU ENDED UP BECOMING FRIGHTENED IN SUCH A STRANGE WAY, BERUNE ...

YOU SAW IT TOO, DIDN'T YOU!?
ON THAT RAINY DAY,
THAT STRANGE WHITE SHADOW DISAPPEARING IN THE VIP ROOM!
...I-I SAW IT,
BUT WASN'T IT JUST MADAM OR MILADY WEARING SOMETHING WHITE ...?
WHAT IS THAT SOMETHING WHITE !?
I HAVE NEVER SEEN MADAM OR MILADY WEARING CLOTHES LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW!?
I'M SURE THAT WAS A SPIRIT, OR A GHOST ...
NO!
IT WAS DEFINITELY THE SILHOUETTE OF THE WITCH !
HA HA HA HA ..... .
... WELL, AT SOME POINT, BERUNE BECAME LIKE THIS
I, WELL ... I'M NOT SO NAIVE,
SO, THE MORE SCARED BERUNE BECAME,
THE STRONGER MY FEELING WAS THAT THIS WAS RIDICULOUS... THAT THERE'S NO WAY A WITCH EXISTS
BUT, INDEED, ONE NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO READ THE SITUATION ...
I MEAN, I STARTED TO TO FEEL THAT THIS WAS A TOPIC I'D BETTER NOT TALK ABOUT CARELESSLY
GHOST STORIES AND CURSES SOUND REALLY STUPID WHEN HEARD BY OUTSIDERS
... BUT, YOU KNOW,


NO JOKE ...
IT REALLY WAS
TO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE THERE AND BELIEVE IN THEM, IT'S ABSOLUTELY NOT A JOKING MATTER
EVENTUALLY ...DECIDED TO SPEAK MY MIND TO YASU
THAT'S WHY I
... ASUNE DIDN'T BELIEVE MY STORY EVEN ONE BIT
... AND, AFTER THAT, WHAT DID THAT CHILD SAY?
STRANGE WAS HAPPENING TO ME ...!
I SAID THAT SOME-THING, LIKE ...
I TOLD YASU 'I THOUGHT THEY WERE YOUR PRANKS, BUT IT WAS DEFINITELY NOT YOU'

I FELT IRRITATED AT RECEIVING ORDERS FROM A YOUNGER PERSON, SO I ALWAYS RESISTED,
BUT YASU ALWAYS HANDLED THE WORK FLAWLESSLY
.....
YASU WASN'T AS CLUMSY AND STUPID AS THE OLDER SERVANTS SAID
...TO TELL THE TRUTH,
BUT NOBODY DISCUSSED IT WITH BELIEVED IT...!
YASU TOLD ME THE SAME THING HAD HAPPENED SEVERAL TIMES,
TO THE POINT OF BEING MOCKED LIKE THAT ...!
I THOUGHT IT STRANGE THAT YASU COULD LOSE THINGS
IT DID 'EXIST'
THAT'S WHY I WAS SURE

IN THIS MANSION,
SOMETHING STRANGE AND NOT HUMAN
DID 'EXIST' !
IS THAT THE WITCH BEATRICE ?
IF IT IS CALLED LIKE THAT,
I'LL BELIEVE IT
ANYWAY,
SOMETHING THAT CAN'T BE EXPLAINED BY HUMAN MEANS DEFINITELY DID 'EXIST' IN THE MANSION!
THE PEOPLE WHO COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THAT
THOUGHT-LESSLY CALLED ME AND YASU CLUMSY OR CARELESS!
THEY DON'T GET IT
THEY DON'T GET ANYTHING !!

NO!!
SO IT MUST HAVE BEEN ONLY A MISUNDER-STANDING OF YOURS, REALLY...
AND YOU STOPPED MAKING ALL THAT FUSS ABOUT LOSING THINGS, RIGHT?
AFTER FREAKING OUT BECAUSE OF THAT, YOU STARTED TO BECOME MORE RELIABLE, TOO, RIGHT, BERUNE?
...B-BUT STILL,
AND THEY SAID THAT THE WITCH REALLY DOES EXIST ...
... AND SHANNON AND KUMASAWA SĀN, TOO!
I TALKED ABOUT IT WITH YASU
BECAUSE I DIDN'T HESITATE TO MAKE FUN OF HER ...!
THEY ALSO SAID I HAD BEEN CURSED
AND THAT THE OLD SERVANTS ALL MAKE SURE TO RESPECT HER!
AND I ASKED GENJI-SAMA AND HE ALLOWED ME TO VISIT THE LOCAL SHRINE!
I LEARNED FROM YASU HOW TO GIVE OFFERINGS TO THE DOLL IN THE VIP ROOM!
THAT'S WHY I CHANGED MY MIND!

SUDDENLY!
AND THEN IT ALL CALMED DOWN
ASUNE, YOU WERE FINE BECAUSE YOU EVENTUALLY STOPPED MAKING FUN OF THE WITCH,
BUT, IF YOU HAD CLUELESSLY CONTINUED TO MAKE FUN OF HER,
NO DOUBT YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN TARGETED NEXT!
YES, I GUARANTEE IT!
YOU DEFINITELY WOULD HAVE BEEN CURSED ...!
.....
INDEED... I GUESS I'D DRAW PEOPLE AWAY BY DOING THAT ...
YOU DON'T GET IT!
YOU REALLY DON'T GET IT, DO YOU !?
THAT'S WHY I MADE SURE TO TEACH THE NEW SERVANTS PROPERLY !

'IN THIS MANSION, THERE IS A WITCH CALLED BEATRICE SAMA ...!'
'IF YOU MAKE FUN OF HER, SHE WILL SERIOUSLY CURSE YOU...!!', I SAID
.....
... BERUNE ...
WHEN THINGS,
YOU KNOW, DISAP-PEARED,
THAT WAS A SIGN THAT THE WITCH WAS WATCHING US NEARBY ...
IF YOU SAY THINGS LIKE 'IT'S A PRANK' OR 'THERE'S NO WAY THE WITCH EXISTS!',
YOU END UP GETTING CURSED EVEN MORE...!!
WHEN THE KEY DISAPPEARED,
... THAT WAS

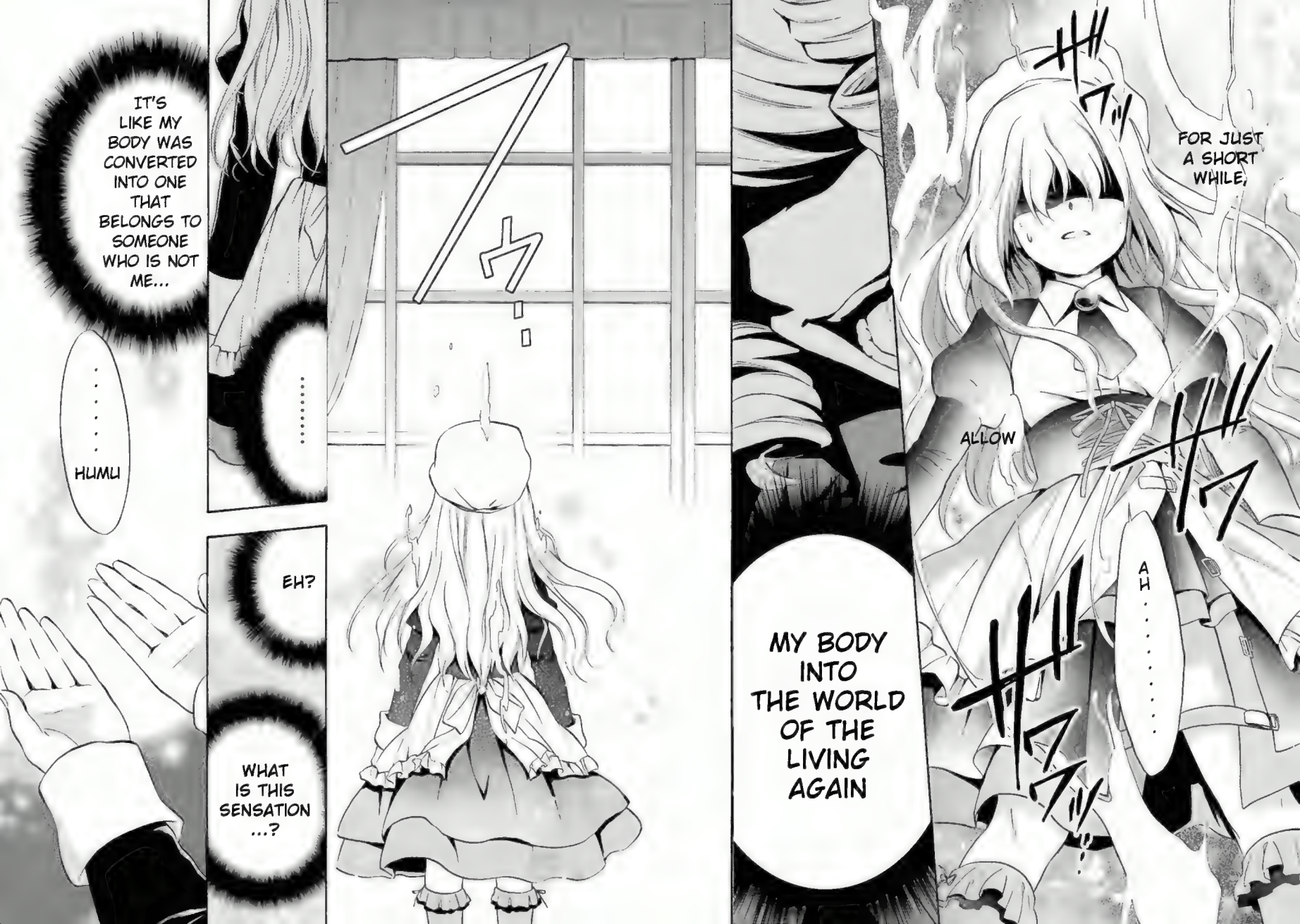
A SIGN THAT THE WITCH HAD APPEARED ...!!
BERUNE SĀN ...
ONCE AGAIN, YOU THREW YOUR BUNCH OF KEYS ON THE BED ...
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WARN YOU, YOU DON'T LEARN
WHY WON'T YOU LISTEN TO WHAT I SAY ...?

A DELICIOUS BUNCH OF KEYS IS ABANDONED HERE ...
?
IF YOU LOWER YOUR GUARD,
YOU'LL HAVE A BAD TIME WITH THE WITCH'S PRANK
KUUHYAAHYAAA
YOU MUST NOT LEAVE THINGS LYING AROUND CARELESSLY

S... STOP, PLEASE ...!
PLEASE, PLAY YOUR PRANKS ON ME
PLEASE, SPARE THE OTHERS ...
THOSE ARE BERUNE SAN'S KEYS!
YOU'VE GOTTEN SO CAUTIOUS LATELY
THAT IT'S NOT FUN ANYMORE
.....
... KUU KUKU KUKU KU,
I'M KIDDING, JUST KIDDING
STILL,
THOSE GIRLS REALLY ARE UNPLEASANT, REFUSING TO LISTEN
TO A FRIEND'S KIND ADVICE

ANY ATTITUDE OF SCORN TOWARDS MY FRIEND
I'LL TAKE AS SOMETHING AGAINST ME...!
DO YOU INTEND TO PLAY A PRANK ON BERUNE SAN'S KEYS...?
I'M BEGGING YOU, PLEASE DON'T DO IT...!
SHE WILL SUSPECT THAT I WAS THE ONE WHO HID IT AGAIN ...!
HMU,
SO SHE LOOKS DOWN ON MY MAGIC AS IF IT WAS THE WORK OF SOMEONE LIKE YOU...!?
VERY WELL, THEN
I'LL SHOW HER SOMETHING IMPOSSIBLE FOR A HUMAN!

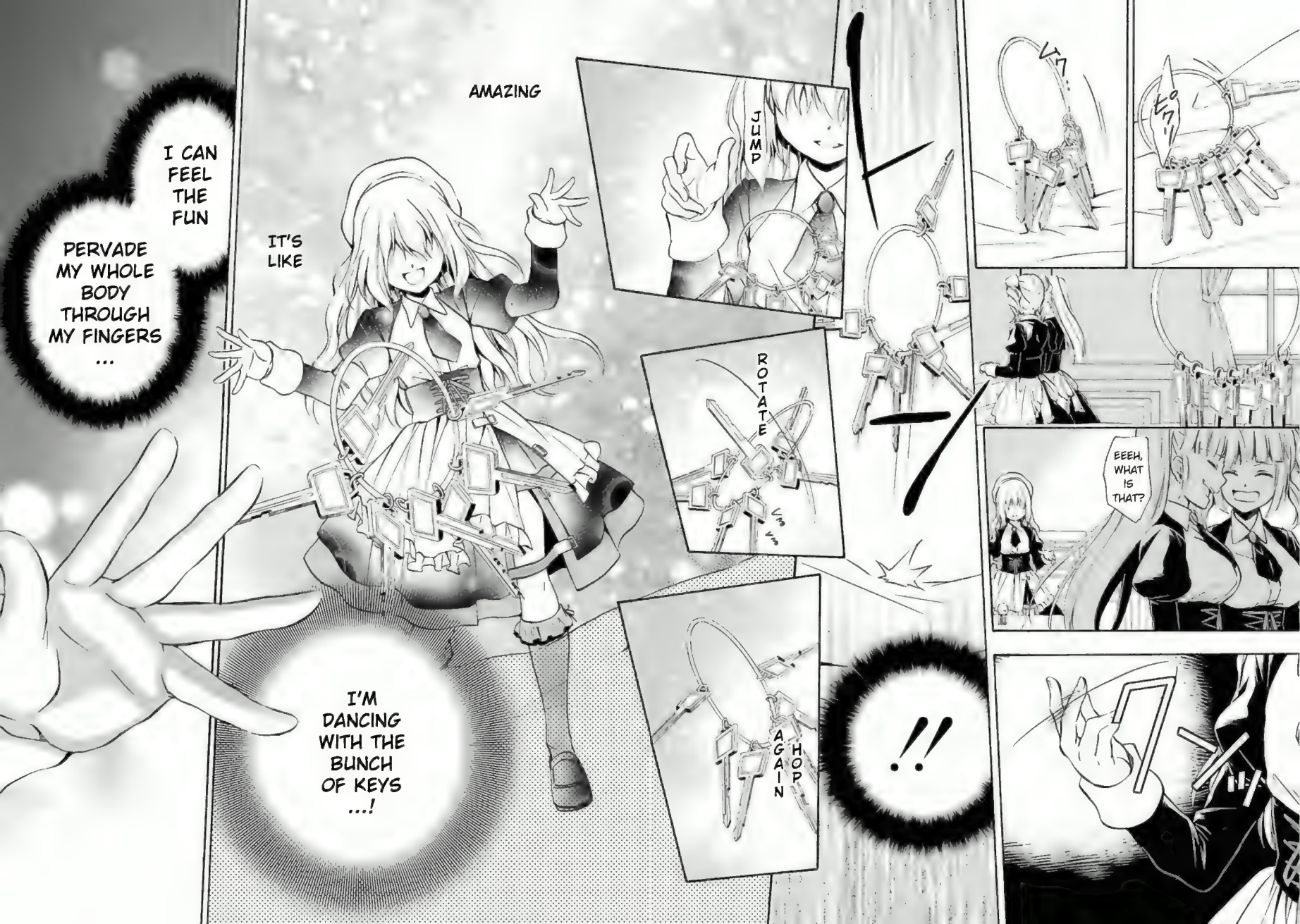
I'LL SHOW HER MY MAGIC !!
FOOLISH BERUNE
I'LL MAKE YOU REGRET NOT HAVING LISTENED TO MY FRIEND'S ADVICE
AFTER SO LONG, I'VE STARTED TO WANT TO SHOW SOME REAL MAGIC!
THIS FLIMSY BODY IS NOT ENOUGH !
I AM BORROWING YOUR BODY !!
EH.....?
.....


IT'S LIKE MY BODY WAS CONVERTED INTO ONE THAT BELONGS TO SOMEONE WHO IS NOT ME...
HUMU
EH?
WHAT IS THIS SENSATION ...?
MY BODY INTO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING AGAIN
FOR JUST A SHORT WHILE,
ALLOW
AH.....

MY BODY IS MOVING ON ITS OWN ...!
HAVING A BODY IS REALLY GOOD!
IT FEELS GOOD, THIS TICKLISH FEELING OF THE OPEN AIR ON THE SKIN
!
WHAT DO YOU PLAN ON DOING?
PLEASE, DON'T DO ANYTHING MEAN ...
DON'T BE AFRAID, I'LL RETURN YOUR BODY SOON
I'M ONLY GOING TO DISCIPLINE HER WITH A LITTLE PRANK
IT WON'T BE ANYTHING CHEAP
THAT WOULD MAKE HER SUSPECT YOU ...!

COME,
WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN SLEEPING !
TRY TO REMEMBER

WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN SLEEPING ...
COME, TRY TO REMEMBER
AAH, I SEE
THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO USE MAGIC ...
AND UNKNOWN SENSATION ...!
NOW, ALL I CAN DO IS ABANDON MY SOUL ...
TO THIS MYSTERIOUS, INDESCRIBABLE ...
MY MIND GOES COMPLETELY BLANK
I CAN'T THINK AT ALL

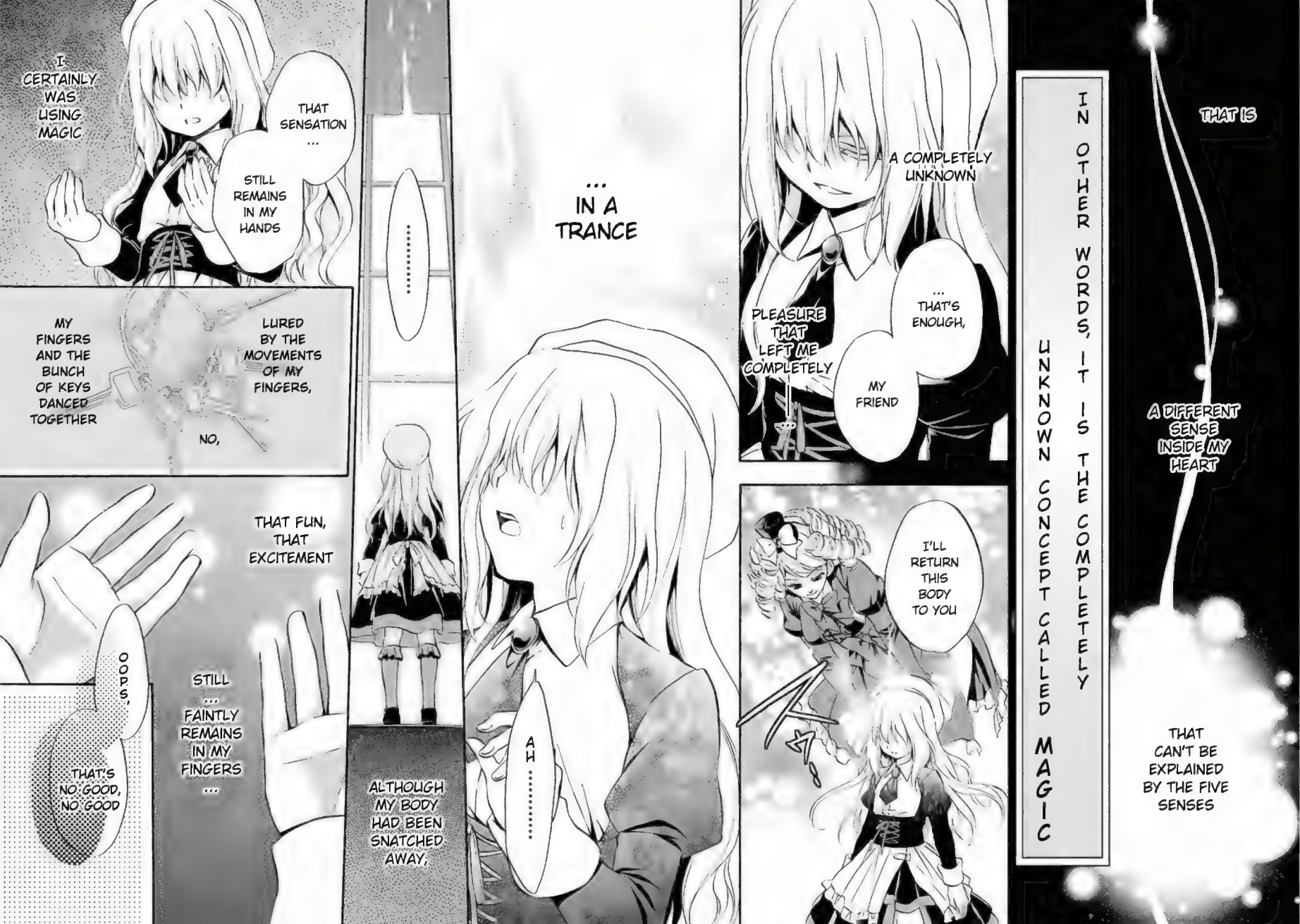

I CAN FEEL THE FUN
PERVADE MY WHOLE BODY THROUGH MY FINGERS ...
IT'S LIKE
AMAZING
JUMP
ROTATE
HOP
AGAIN
I'M DANCING WITH THE BUNCH OF KEYS ...!
!!
EEEH, WHAT IS THAT?

OOPS, THAT'S NO GOOD.
IF THE WHOLE BUNCH DISAPPEARS, MY FRIEND WILL BE SUSPECTED AGAIN
THE ONLY THING WE NEED TO MAKE DISAPPEAR
...YES
IS THE KEY TO THIS ROOM
WELL, WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH THIS KEY ?
...JUST ERASING IT WOULD BE BORING
IN THAT CASE ...
KUU KUU KU ...
I'M GONNA THROW IT INSIDE THE LOCKER OF THAT GIRL!

MY FRIEND, WHO WAS DOING THE CLEANING HERE TOGETHER WITH THEM THE WHOLE TIME, WILL HAVE AN ALIBI!
IF I DO THIS,
COME,
TRY TO REMEMBER
YES,
THAT IS A WARM AND DARK PLACE ...
WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN SLEEPING!
IT'S INSIDE THAT BERUNE'S LOCKER!!
ハァ…

A GOLDEN...
BUTTLERFLY...?
UH?
I SEE, IT'S GOLDEN BECAUSE THE GOLDEN WITCH ENTRUSTED THE MASTER WITH THE GOLD, HUH
AND BUTTLERFLIES DISLIKE SPIDERWEBS ...
THAT'S WHY IT'S A GOLDEN BUTTERFLY

THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLIES ARE THE MINIONS OF THE WITCH BEATRICE
...
I CAN CLEARLY TELL THAT IS WHERE IT ENDED UP
THOUGH THAT PLACE IS NOT HERE,
THE KEY THAT DISAPPEARED IS INSIDE BERUNE-SAN'S LOCKER AT THIS VERY MOMENT
...
... I KNOW


I CERTAINLY WAS USING MAGIC
THAT SENSATION ...
STILL REMAINS IN MY HANDS
MY FINGERS AND THE BUNCH OF KEYS DANCED TOGETHER
LURED BY THE MOVEMENTS OF MY FINGERS,
NO,
THAT FUN, THAT EXCITEMENT
OOPS,
THAT'S NO GOOD, NO GOOD
STILL ... FAINTLY REMAINS IN MY FINGERS ...
ALTHOUGH MY BODY HAD BEEN SNATCHED AWAY,
.....
... IN A TRANCE
AH .....
I'LL RETURN THIS BODY TO YOU
A COMPLETELY UNKNOWN PLEASURE THAT LEFT ME COMPLETELY
... THAT'S ENOUGH, MY FRIEND
IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS THE COMPLETELY UNKNOWN CONCEPT CALLED MAGIC
THAT IS
A DIFFERENT SENSE INSIDE MY HEART
THAT CAN'T BE EXPLAINED BY THE FIVE SENSES

ALMOST HAD YASU SCOLDING ME AGAIN
NOT TO LEAVE THE KEYS LYING AROUND IN PLACES LIKE THIS
I'D NEVER PUT SOMETHING DOWN
AND FORGET ABOUT IT
... DID BERUNE SAN'S KEY REALLY
... DISAPPEAR THROUGH MAGIC?

BERUNE SAN, PLEASE, LOCK THE ROOM …
OOKAY
……
ゴニョゴニョ
……?
… WHAT ?
WHAT'S WRONG ?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?
… WHAT, THAT
… WHAT HAPPENED …?
… WHAT IS THIS, SERIOUSLY ?
ガチャ
ガチャ…
ギュー

IT'S NOT THIS ONE,
AND NOT THIS ONE, EITHER ...
EH!? WHAT IS THIS !?
I DON'T GET IT!
MY MASTER KEY'S GONE!
ONLY THE MASTER KEY IS GONE ...!
W... WHY ...!?
THERE'S NO WAY IT'D COME OFF ...!!

HOW !?
HOW COME IT'S GONE !?
INDEED, THAT WAS ...
MAGIC
.....

Episode7:*Requiem of the golden witch*

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